Chapter 9

SCRAN: Assembling a Community of Practice for Standardising the Transformation of eGovernment Services

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ABSTRACT

This chapter draws attention to the triple-helix model of knowledge production and the Web-services assembled to support the development of the SmartCities (inter) Regional Academic Network as a community of practice for standardising the transformation of eGovernment services. It draws particular attention to the University-Industry-Government collaborations (triple-helix) underlying the Web 2.0 service-orientated architecture of this knowledge infrastructure and the deployment of such technologies as an enterprise allowing communities to learn about how to standardise eGovernment services as transformative business-to-citizen applications. The chapter serves to highlight the critical role business-to-citizen applications play in making it possible for cities to be smart in reaching beyond the transactional logic of service provision and grasping the potential regional innovation systems offer to democratising the customisation of eGovernment through multi-channel access and via user profiling.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is drawn from the capacity-building outcomes of the North Sea Intereg 4B project (2008-2011) known as SmartCities. In particular, the development of the inter-regional academic network that underpins the SmartCity venture and which supports the project’s capacity-building aspirations. After reflecting on the communication needs and technical requirements of this venture, the chapter goes on to configure SCRAN’s triple-helix and set out the ‘step-wise’ logic of the organisation’s knowledge-base. From here
attention turns towards the networking of the triple-helix and the web-services assembled to support the development of SCRAN as a community of practice (CoP).

Here attention is drawn to the University-Industry-Government collaborations (triple-helix) underlying the Web 2.0 service-orientated architecture of this knowledge infrastructure and deployment of such technologies as an enterprise for organisations to learn about how this CoP works to standardise the transformation of eGovernment (eGov) services. In particular how it works to standardise eGov services as transformative business-citizen applications that in turn allow cities to be smart by integrating the business sector into the North Sea regional innovation system.

This serves to standardise the transformation of eGov as a triple-helix of Web-2.0-based architectures, knowledge infrastructures and technical enterprises. Architectures, infrastructures and enterprises that in turn allow organisations to learn about the critical role which business-to-citizen applications play in making it possible for cities to become smart. The possibility that business-to-
citizen applications offer to do this is something which has previously been overlooked. This is unfortunate because they are critical in understanding whether the generation of intellectual capital by universities offers the opportunity for cities to reach beyond the transactional logic of service provision. Reach beyond this line of reasoning and in turn know if their post-transaction-based collaborations with industry and government are smart in grasping the potential regional innovation systems have to democratise this transformation.

BACKGROUND

Figure 1 draws attention to the academic network underpinning the SmartCities venture. In this respect it identifies the network of academic institutions, their city partners and the specific role they in turn take in supporting SCRAN.

As can be seen, for Edinburgh Napier University the main object of attention is the methodology of this venture and for Mechelen (MEMORI), the object of the exercise is to help the commu-

Figure 1. Academic organisation of SmartCity partner(s)
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